

For more than 45 years Dolores has done more than serve hot dogs. For all these years she has had to listen to people in our community who have had problems or are down on their luck. It is not unusual to go into Caspers and see Dolores counseling someone about their kids or talking to her own kids. Whenever you walk into Caspers, she always has a smile for you. That is why so many people go out of their way to get a dog at Caspers.

Mr. Speaker, I should know; I have eaten as many Caspers hot dogs as any person in the county. I started eating hot dogs at Caspers in Richmond. There was a rumor when we were young that the record number of dogs eaten in one sitting was 19. On a challenge I tried to break it and got to 14. Even today the debate goes on as to where the best hot dog was served. Was it Chris's in Oakland, Doggie Diner in Oakland and Richmond or Caspers with a "K"?

Mr. Speaker, time turned out to be the test; most of the others are gone now—they just could not compete with the great people at Caspers, especially Dolores who has been a great friend to so many in the community. It is wonderful to see her get this recognition. I submit the following article from the Contra Costa Times:

Hot Dog Lady's a Fixture at Pleasant Hill eatery
(By Katie Oyan)

PLEASANT HILL—Dolores Larkin rarely goes unnoticed.

People point and stare at her in the grocery store, at the doctor's office—even once when she was vacationing in Hawaii.

"Kids will say, 'Look mom, it's the hot dog lady!'" she said, "It used to embarrass me, but it doesn't anymore. I like it."

In November, the 68-year-old great-grandmother will celebrate her 45th anniversary as an employee at Casper's Famous Hot Dogs, a popular hang-out and fast-food joint on the corner of Vivian Drive and Contra Costa Boulevard.

The Concord resident doesn't sling dogs for the money. In fact, the only bad thing one of her managers, Ron Dorian, could say about Larkin is that she sometimes forgets to cash her paychecks.

Instead, the "hot dog lady" said she has stuck around for the company.

"I like my customers—that's why I'm here," said Larkin, wearing her long, dark hair in a pony-tail and bubble-gum pink earrings to match her Casper's apron.

Over the years, Larkin has made Casper's her second home. Of her five children, 10 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren, seven of them have worked with her at the restaurant, and some still do. To family, she's known as "Grandma hot dog."

Before coming to Pleasant Hill, Larkin spent five years at the Casper's on First Avenue in Oakland. In 1960, her boss sent her to the Pleasant Hill Casper's to train employees before the restaurant's grand opening. She has been there ever since.

And so have many of her customers.

Bob Wescott, a retired military pilot and researcher, has been a regular for so long, Larkin gave him his own key. Five days a week, he opens the store and starts the coffee, getting a cup ready for Larkin when she comes in.

"Another gentleman and his wife did it for years, but they got too old and said they couldn't do it anymore. I guess I just happened to be there," Wescott said.

A couple of retired Pleasant Hill police officers also lend Larkin a little volunteer labor. They come in each morning and re-

stock the restaurant's paper cups and lids. If there are any light bulbs that need replacing, they do that, too.

"Everyone thinks the world of Dolores," Wescott said. "That's why we do it. She's just an awful nice person, that's all."

One of the first fast food chains in the Bay Area, Casper's migrated to the East Bay from Chicago in 1934. In addition to the one in Pleasant Hill, there are 10 Casper's restaurants—in Albany, Richmond, San Pablo, Walnut Creek, Dublin, Concord, two in Oakland and two in Hayward.

Among the other stores in the chain, the Pleasant Hill Casper's is known as "the country club" for its friendly, comfortable environment, Larkin said. Devoid of a playland or flashy banners, a couple of counters and a handful of wooden tables give the restaurant its old fashioned appeal. "Floy," the philodendron in the front window, is named after a coworker who died about five years ago. "We raised our kids together," Larkin said.

The Pleasant Hill Casper's is also the most successful in the chain, selling about 200,000 dogs a year.

People go out of their way to stop there for a \$2 or \$3 meal. Larkin said the most popular item is the Casper's dog, a natural-casing frankfurter that comes on a steamed bun with mustard, relish, tomatoes and onions. Employees also serve 10-inch spicy polish, smoked Cajun and turkey frankfurters.

Red Skelton is the most famous person Larkin can remember serving.

He came in two or three times, she said. Congressman George Miller stops in once in a while, too.

In her spare time, Larkin makes cakes for her friends' birthdays and weddings. Her other hobby is "kids."

"My last girl was born on my day off, she said. "I worked all nine months."

About 10 years ago, a mathematician who dropped in for a hot dog figured out that if someone were to line up end-to-end all the hot dogs that Larkin has served, they'd stretch from here to San Diego.

By now, they'd probably stretch halfway back again.

WAIVING POINTS OF ORDER AGAINST CONFERENCE REPORT ON S. 835, ESTUARIES AND CLEAN WATERS ACT OF 2000

HON. STEPHEN HORN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 26, 2000

Mr. HORN. Mr. Speaker, I commend the House leadership for bringing this important legislation before us. The Estuary Habitat and Chesapeake Bay Restoration Act of 2000 clarifies Congress' commitment to restoring one million acres of estuaries over the next decade and promoting a partnership between federal, state, and local governments, and the private sector.

The conference report we consider today includes one area that is particularly important to Southern California and the residents of the district I am honored to represent. This area is the Los Cerritos Wetlands. Los Angeles County has lost more than 93 percent of its coastal wetlands. The Los Cerritos Wetlands are one of only three sizable areas of coastal wetlands remaining that could be restored to provide better habitat for fish and wildlife. Furthermore, these wetlands are among a limited number

nationwide existing in an urban environment. It will offer numerous benefits to school children, university researchers, and simply improving the quality of life in a major city such as Long Beach.

Thus far, state and community agencies have worked closely together in the spirit of cooperation and coordination called for in the Estuary Restoration Act. The Wetlands Recovery Project—a partnership of federal, state, and local government, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector—has made acquisition of these wetlands its top priority. The restoration of the Los Cerritos Wetlands will provide an important addition to improving the environment in our region.

Again, I thanked the House leadership, my good friend Representative WAYNE GILCHREST, Chairman BUD SHUSTER, and the other members and staff who—through this legislation—have made an important contribution to the Nation and to Southern California.

DAIRY MARKET ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2000

SPEECH OF

HON. NICK SMITH

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 25, 2000

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. This is a bill to restore stability to America's dairy markets. I introduced the Dairy Market Enhancement Act of 2000, H.R. 5372 earlier this year. The bill establishes a fair and accurate reporting system for manufactured dairy products, requires independent verification for price reporting, and implements measures to ensure compliance with reporting and verification requirements. Senator RUSS FEINGOLD (D-WI) introduced the companion bill in the Senate. This bill S. 2773 now goes to the White House where the President is expected to sign it into law.

Recent reporting errors have highlighted the need to make reporting of dairy products mandatory, verifiable, and enforceable. While I recognize that this legislation will not solve the problem of low milk prices, it will go a long way toward assuring an accurate Federal order price and stabilizing month-to-month fluctuations for farmers.

The bill requires that the U.S. Department of Agriculture use the current survey format as a starting point for mandatory reporting. In order to ensure accuracy, the bill allows the Secretary of Agriculture to require that reporting companies make their records available for department audit. Any willful and intentional violation of requirements to make accurate and timely reports is punishable by a civil fine of up to \$20,000 under the terms of the bill. It also requires that USDA guard the confidentiality of information from each reporting company.

Because the determination of the federal order price is based on the price of components such as butter, cheese, and dry milk, it is important to have processors report price and inventories. This bill makes such reporting mandatory to assure that farmers are paid a price that reflects the current demand for milk and milk products. This is good legislation and I'm glad my colleagues in Congress join us in recognizing its merits.